

peace and security." " Is it better to be beloved than feared, or to be feared than beloved ? Both would be convenient, but because that is hard to attain, it is better and more secure to be feared/' " How honourable it is for a prince to keep his word everybody understands. Nevertheless experience has shown in our times that those who have not tied themselves to it have done great things, and by their cunning and subtlety have overcome those who have been superstitiously exact. For you must understand that there are two ways of contending, by law and by force. The first is proper to men, the second to beasts. But because many times the first is insufficient, recourse must be had to the second. It belongs therefore to a prince to understand both. Seeing therefore it is of such importance to take upon him the nature and disposition of a beast, of all the whole flock he ought to imitate the lion and the fox. A prince who is wise and prudent cannot or ought not to keep his word when the keeping of it is to his prejudice, and the causes for which he promised are removed. Were men all good this doctrine should not be taught; but because they are wicked and not likely to be punctual with you, you are not obliged to any such strictness with them."

Here is the sinister gospel in its crudest form of what the French call *raison d'état*, the doctrine that extraordinary objects cannot be achieved under the ordinary rules, and that the monarch, in seeking the welfare of the state as he understands it, is fettered by no human or divine laws. This is not to say that might is right or that the end, whatever it be, justifies the means; for the exercise of power has to be related to the single definite purpose of the interest of the state. The supreme qualification for the ruler in the eyes of Machiavelli and his disciples is *virtù*, which means not virtue but virility, energy,

force of character, remorseless vigour, the head
to plan and
the arm to strike. The paramount duty of the
representative
and guardian of the community is to survive and
succeed. For
this purpose he must circumvent and intimidate
his enemies
at home and abroad. Half measures, hesitation,
weakness of
will and purpose, are the supreme offence.
Hence the fasci-
nation exerted by Caesar Borgia on the
Florentine Secretary
and diplomatist, who knew him in the flesh. On
the other
hand the author of *The Prince* has as little use
for the brutal
and blundering tyrant as for the ineffectual
idealist. To make
omelettes you must break eggs, but there is no
excuse for
breaking them if you cannot prepare a tasty
dish. Intelligence